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# Mk ii honing guide

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The version I got is the Standard Mk.II Honing Guide, which consists of two parts, namely the honing guide itself and the angle setting jig. The Veritas Mk II Honing Guide and Box (plane iron not included) The first step is to pick the angle that you want for your chisel or plane blade. Depending on the angle, you can pick one of three settings on the honing guide itself, one for low, one for medium, and one for high angles. These have some overlap, and can handle angles ranging from 15° to 54°. Select red (high angles), yellow (normal angles), or green (low angles) The second step is to then select your chosen angle on the angle setting jig. You'll need to pick the color that corresponds to the setting you chose on the honing guide (green for low, yellow for medium, and red for high angles). This is done by screwing a brass knob tight. Select a hole for predetermined angles, or anywhere in between for custom angles Then it is time to attach the angle-setting jig to the honing guide, which you do by sliding it over a dovetail bar. Lock it in place by screwing the brass knob. There is an indicator that you line up with a short scale that corresponds to the width of the blade or chisel you are going to sharpen. This ensures the blade is positioned in the middle of the guide, which makes it easier to put even pressure when sharpening. Select the width of your plane iron or chisel The next step is to put the blade through the clamp head, with the flat side facing the angle-setting jig. The side of the blade should be flush with the side of the angle registration jig. This ensures that you will be sharpening at an exact 90 degree angle from the side of your blade. If you would not do this, you would end up with a skewed blade. The stop sets the angle, the side bar guarantees squareness Now it is time to lock the blade in position. You do this by tightening two brass knobs on the clamp head. This is the tricky bit, because you have to turn the whole guide around to tighten the knobs. While doing this (especially at the start) I found that often the position of the blade shifted a little when I turned the guide upside down. It took a few tries to get used to, but now I can tighten the clamp head quite effectively, without any movements in the blade position. So although it is a bit finicky, I wouldn't consider it an actual problem or downside. Now the honing guide is ready to be used. Simply roll it back and forth over your stone to start sharpening. Sharpening a Stanley 78 Plane Iron Another feature of the Mk II Honing Guide is that you can quite easily add micro bevels. Thanks to the eccentric shape of the roller, you can add a few degrees to your bevel with the twist of a knob. I don't use micro bevels myself, but some people swear by them. Their main advantage is that you don't need to remove as much material when honing your blade, making it easier and faster to get your blade back to full sharpness. There is much good to be said about the Veritas Honing Guide Mk II. To start, the build quality is excellent, with the brass knobs and cast iron body. The whole thing feels sturdy, without being too heavy. It is light enough for you to move it smoothly over sharpening stones. It feels like it might last for a lifetime. The only thing you will probably need to replace at some point is the roller, but a replacement roller is only about $10. The second thing I really like about this honing guide is that it does everything you want it to do. Some other honing guides (especially the cheap ones) don't provide a way to set specific angles, meaning you have to make jigs yourself. They also don't guarantee squareness, meaning you have to test for square yourself every time. The Veritas does both things, making it extremely convenient to set up. That's also how I see this jig, not as absolutely essential, but as a tool that makes it way more convenient to do woodworking. It gives you peace of mind that the tool you are sharpening will be the right angle and nice and square. I'm able to do freehand sharpening as well, but I find myself constantly checking for square and for the right angle. This makes it a much more tedious and frustrating process. Another thing I like are the ergonomics. It is simply much more comfortable to your hands to use than freehand sharpening. There is a bar at the back on which your thumbs can rest, while the tips of your index or middle fingers put downward pressure on the blade. Simpler Eclipse-style honing guides lack space to put your hands, which forces your hands into a cramped up position that is very tiring when sharpening for longer periods of time. That said, this jig does not make the metal on your blades remove any faster, so sharpening for a long time still remains a tedious process. At least your hands won't be as sore! Something else that makes this tool excellent is the price. It is much cheaper than a comparable jig from Lie Nielsen. Given that you will probably use this honing guide for many years, it is not that big of an investment. However, if you also want to be able sharpen narrow chisels, it becomes a bit more expensive, but I'll touch upon that in the next section. There are two main downsides to the Veritas Honing Guide Mk II. The first is that to sharpen very narrow chisels, you'll have to buy a second clamp head, which almost doubles the cost of the guide. To be able to sharpen mortise chisels, you'll have to add a third clamp head, making the system as a whole even more expensive. I recently got my hands on the narrow clamp head, and it works great. Not just for chisels but also for thinner plane blades like low angle block planes. It does much better with chisels than the regular clamp head. Can strongly recommend getting this as well. The second downside is that if your chisels or plane blades are either very short, or are tapered, like is the case with Japanese chisels, they won't stay put in the clamp head. Due to tapered top of Japanese chisels, the clamp head can only put pressure on one very thin line, allowing the chisel to move when you sharpen it. The Veritas Honing Guide Mk II is an excellent tool, and a class above most cheaper guides. It can be a bit fiddly to set up at first, but when you know how to use it, you can get your blade ready to hone within a minute. It is easy to set the angle you want, easy to align your blade to be square, and comfortable to use. It is also not too expensive, being about half the price of the more barebones Lie-Nielsen honing jig. All-in-all, the Veritas Honing Guide offers great value for money, and is a great help especially to beginning woodworkers who find freehand sharpening daunting. I bought mine at a local Dutch store, but these are some good places to buy the Veritas honing guide: Axminster (ship worldwide now)Amazon UKAmazon US Tip: If you enjoyed this review, be sure to also read my review of the Veritas Router Plane and Veritas Cabinet Scraper! I hope you found this review helpful. If you have any feedback, or maybe you have a different opinion of this honing guide, let me know in the comments below! I'll try to respond to every comment. Setting Up the Honing Guide The MK.II honing guide is designed to handle chisels as narrow as 1/2" and blades as wide as 2 7/8" and up to 15/32" thick. First, polish the back of the blade, working your way up to the finest grit of your sharpening medium. Veritas blades are lapped flat, so you are simply polishing this surface to the same degree that you will be honing the bevel. Other tools may require lapping. Before increasing the bevel angle of a new blade, consider using it for a time with its factory angle. If you experience edge failure, increase the angle by 5°. This approach lets you optimize the cutting geometry for the work you do. 1) Set the angle configuration First, determine the bevel angle configuration to be used for the blade carrier based on these guidelines: Red for high angles Yellow for standard angles Green for back bevels Secure the blade carrier in the chosen color position to the roller body with the locking knob (Photo 1). Photo 1 – In this example, the yellow position is used for the blade carrier and registration jig. 2) Set the registration jig To set the registration jig, slide it onto the blade carrier and follow these steps: i) Set the jig such that the pointer on the top jaw of the jig aligns with the approximate width of your blade on the scale on the top of the blade carrier (Diagram). Diagram – In this example, the stop is set for a 1" wide blade and a 30° bevel angle using the yellow standard-angle configuration. ii) Tighten the registration jig clamp knob only finger tight. iii) Set the registration stop to the desired bevel angle, using the preset in the same color chosen in step 1. 3) Install the blade With the honing guide held upside down, slide the blade into the registration jig through the clamp bar until the cutting edge touches the registration stop (Photo 2). Photo 2 – The blade bears against the fence as well as the stop. Finally, hand tighten both blade clamp knobs firmly and evenly, and slide the registration jig off the blade carrier (Photo 3). Photo 3 - The clamp bar should be parallel to the upper jaw to firmly secure the blade. 4) Set the roller position In the last step, rotate the micro-bevel knob to the 12 o'clock position to hone the primary bevel, or to the 6 o'clock position for a micro-bevel of 1° to 2°. Micro-bevel knob set for honing primary bevel. Micro-bevel knob set for honing the micro-bevel.